

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 308898
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY S/P:DAKORN:JD
APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY
NEA:NAVELIOTES
INR:HNSAUNDERS
S/S - O:LRFLAISCHER

-----026319 290012Z /61

P 282323Z DEC 77 ZFF6
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 308898

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, EG, IS, SY

SUBJECT: YOUR DECEMBER 14 TALK WITH SHIHABI

REF: DAMASCUS 7712

1. WE AGREE THAT SHIHABI'S APPROACH TO YOU WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY MADE AT ASSAD'S INSTRUCTION, BUT EVEN IF THIS WERE NOT THE CASE SHIHABI'S POSITION WOULD STILL MAKE IT IMPORTANT. WE WILL WANT TO USE THE SHIHABI CHANNEL TO STAY IN CONTACT AND DO WHAT CAN BE DONE TO BRING SYRIA OFF OF ITS CURRENT NEGATIVE POSITION, BUT THIS MAY BE PRIMARILY A HOLDING OPERATION FOR THE TIME BEING. IT MUST BE CLEAR TO ASSAD AND TO SHIHABI THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO

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SUPPORT OF THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DIALOGUE BECAUSE WE FEEL IT OFFERS THE BEST PRESENT HOPE OF BREAKING THE LONG IMPASSE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, PROCEDURALLY AND SUBSTANTIVELY AND BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IT LEAVES THE DOOR STILL OPEN TO BROADENING THE NEGOTIATIONS. IF THAT DIALOGUE DOES SUCCEED IN ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR A BROAD SETTLEMENT, THE PRESSURES ON ASSAD TO JOIN IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL IN-

CREASE AND DEVELOPMENTS MIGHT MAKE IT EASIER FOR ASSAD TO JOIN A LATER ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS. THE ART WILL BE TO FIND WAYS OF MAKING SUCH A COURSE AS PAINLESS AND DIGNIFIED FOR ASSAD AS POSSIBLE.

2. THE COROLLARY OF THE ABOVE IS THAT UNTIL WE CAN SEE MORE CLEARLY WHERE THE SADAT-BEGIN DIALOGUE IS LEADING THERE IS PROBABLY LITTLE THAT WE CAN PROPOSE TO THE SYRIANS. SUGGEST THAT YOU GET BACK TO SHIHABI WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND TELL HIM THAT, AS SECRETARY TOLD ASSAD, WE FULLY SHARE HIS DESIRE TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN BUILT UP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES DURING THE LAST FOUR YEARS AND APPRECIATE SHIHABI'S INITIATIVE IN APPROACHING YOU. YOU SHOULD SAY THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO SUPPORT THE EFFORTS THAT EGYPT AND ISRAEL HAVE UNDERTAKEN FOR REASONS DESCRIBED ABOVE AND BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE AS BUILDING BLOCK TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. IN DOING SO WE CONSIDER THAT WE ARE ACTING IN THE LONG TERM BEST INTEREST OF ALL OF THE STATES INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO ACCEPT AT FACE VALUE STATEMENTS BY SADAT AND BEGIN THAT THEIR OBJECTIVE IS A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND WILL ENCOURAGE PRESENT TALKS TO KEEP THAT OBJECTIVE IN SIGHT. WE UNDERSTAND SYRIA'S VIEWS AND HOPE THAT THE COURSE OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS WILL LEAD TO THE SARG ASSUMING ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. WITHOUT QUESTION,
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PAGE 03 STATE 308898

WE WANT SYRIA TO REJOIN THE PEACE PROCESS AND WILL DO WHAT WE CAN TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE. WE WILL BE GIVING THOUGHT TO THIS OURSELVES OVER THE COMING WEEKS AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY THOUGHTS ON PRACTICAL MOVES THAT SHIHABI MIGHT HAVE. IT WILL PROBABLY BE A WHILE BEFORE WE WILL HAVE ENOUGH OF A SENSE OF HOW THAT MIGHT BE DONE TO OFFER SPECIFIC IDEAS, BUT WE WILL HAVE THIS OBJECTIVE VERY MUCH IN MIND.

3. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE ANY SUGGESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME AS TO BEST TACTIC FOR HANDLING THE SYRIANS DURING THIS PERIOD AND HOW TO EASE ASSAD'S WAY BACK TO THE NEGOTIATIONS ASSUMING EGYPT AND ISRAEL ESTABLISH AN OVERALL FRAMEWORK IN WHICH SYRIA CAN FIND A PLACE.

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APPROVED BY S/S-O:LFLEISCHER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 308898

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WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOL RPT STATE 308898 SENT ACTION DAMASCUS INFO CAIRO & TEL AVIV
DTD 28 DEC 7

QUOTE: S E C R E T STATE 308898

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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TAGS: PGOV, EG, IS, SY, US, (ASSAD, HAFIZ)
To: DAMASCUS CAIRO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bbe820fb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
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